

## GARDEN HOMES EASY FOR ALL

## PLANS OF SAGE FOUNDATION FOR FOREST HILLS.

A Business Enterprise, Not a Charity, and Prices Will Be Too High for Laborers. The Man on Salary to Be Well Moused at Quite Moderate Outlay.

Forest Hills Gardens, the suburban development of the Sage Foundation, is a tract of 112 acres at Forest Hills Station, nine miles distant from the New York City station at Second Avenue and Thirty-third Street, and three miles from Jamaica on the New York City line. The trip from the Pennsylvania station to Forest Hills occupies thirteen minutes.

There has been a considerable amount of misapprehension regarding the nature and the purposes of this development. In the first place it is not in any sense a charity, but a business proposition which is expected to pay fair profits to the foundation. In the second place it is not intended for the day laborer or others usually classed loosely as workmen, because at the present price of land in the vicinity rents cannot profitably be made cheap enough to accommodate those depending on a day laborer's wage.

In one direction, however, the foundation hopes to do a very great good with its present enterprise and that is in the way of education. Mrs. Sage and those whom she has associated with her in the foundation believe that much more can be given for the money than the majority

of sixty foot width, which are direct, but which at the same time follow the topography of the land.

The second principle which has guided Mr. Olmsted is that those streets which are not needed as thoroughfares should be planned and constructed to meet the purposes of quiet, attractive residence streets. The local streets at Forest Hills therefore are so laid out as not to invite their use as thoroughfares. While not fantastically crooked, they are never perfectly straight for long stretches, and their macadam roadways are narrow, the space saved being devoted to front gardens. Mr. Olmsted considers one of the most characteristic features of the development to be "the easy, domestic character of these local streets, where the monotony of endless, straight, wind swept thoroughfares which are the New York conception of streets will give place to short, quiet, self-contained and garden-like neighborhoods, each having its own distinctive character."

The business centre of the community will be the Station Square. Near this has been reserved three and a half acres for the Green, which is intended to be a sort of focus for the residential life. Adjoining the Green is a site for the public school, with ample playgrounds. The Station Square itself and its buildings, including the railroad station, are being developed as a single architectural problem, thus insuring a harmony of effect which the usual individual development of similar business centres cannot achieve. Other park spaces are provided. One and a half acres are set aside in another district of the tract as a public recreation



STATION SQUARE  
RAILROAD STATION STORES AND APARTMENTS

in the lots intended for the smaller houses the architects have reduced slightly the size of the back yards without decreasing in any way their usefulness and thus have been able to balance matters. There also are larger lots with room for back yards of the usual size and even some intended to have rear yards of larger than ordinary size at a price only slightly advanced.

With regard to the part of the work under the intimate direction of Mr. Atterbury, the architect has carried out one chief principle throughout the work, to depend upon decorative construction rather than upon ornament for his effect. This has enabled him to use more permanent materials without greatly increasing the cost and has saved the projected community from the awful ornamentation too often seen.

The larger number of the houses to be erected in the foundation's first opera-

tion of the land area to be developed will undoubtedly be sold, Mr. Atterbury says, without building improvements, but at the same time the company, "in order to set a standard and control more surely the architectural character of the future town, are to be erected on the future town, at least for a time, a large number of dwellings. It may be said in passing that plans drawn by other architects for the development of the tract must be approved by experts, thus insuring the company's control over the architectural character of the town."

The initial operation contemplates ten groups of buildings, involving an expenditure in land development and building construction of \$1,250,000. The majority of the buildings contemplated in this operation are to be erected on the more central and therefore the more expensive property and will be in the form of contiguous houses, the detached and semi-detached types of dwellings being possible only on the less central and lower priced portions of the tract.

The group of buildings adjoining the railroad station and forming Station Square will be three and four stories and will contain stores, offices and restaurants and, in the upper stories, non-housekeeping apartments both for men and for women. Working out from this center toward Forest Park, the houses are planned to correspond to the varying values of the lots, as determined by their size, location and prospect. The larger single family dwellings will be from ten to twelve rooms, while the smaller will have four or five. As the property becomes more hilly the groups are smaller and more detached. For all the variations in size, arrangement, cost and architectural treatment, an attempt will be made to keep the houses alike in their domestic and comfortable character. The method of construction, Mr. Atterbury says, that the greatest opportunity presented by the scheme, from the architectural point of view, will lie in the general harmony of design, possible only where the entire scheme of development is laid out and executed under a system of cooperation such as the present.

W. E. Harmon, who has in charge the practical business end of the development, has this to say of the plan from a business point of view. "In the development of Forest Hills Gardens it is proposed to formulate standards for the distribution of real estate which may be accepted by operators handling property of similar character throughout the country with the consequent elimination of waste in energy and money. The trustees of the Sage Foundation are planning to secure the best terms and methods of sale which will be economical for the buyer and profitable for the foundation. While prices will be put on the property which will appeal to the man who has cash on hand, Mr. Harmon says that opportunities will be afforded for others by which they can venture on the purchase of a home or an investment in land on fair terms under reasonable safeguards. "Nothing revolutionary is expected," he adds. "The aim is merely to secure a higher degree of efficiency than now prevails in this department of the real estate business."

The Sage Foundation, he continues, will be satisfied with a reasonable profit; therefore every economy in the marketing will insure to the benefit of the buyer. Land speculations will be provided against, but the prices at which lots are sold will give reasonable assurance of a fair return on an investment. Mr. Harmon cites three elements of value in the purchase of property at Forest Hills Gardens. "First," he says, "the rigid economies in methods of distribution whereby real estate values may fall, and the houses at less than the prevailing rate for similar property. Second, such safeguards will be put about the buyer as will protect him against the accidents of fortune. Third, he will get the benefit of the increment arising from the enormous growth of New York City, which cannot but have an important effect upon a district lying within thirteen minutes of the Pennsylvania Station."

## SHUT OFF FROM BROADWAY.

Widening of Morris Street to Open Up an Isolated District.

There is now before the local board of the Greenwich district a proposition for the widening of Morris street, which is favored by the borough authorities as an improvement which is sorely needed and one which should be made to meet the growing demand for the proper development of that part of Manhattan lying south of Liberty street and west of Broadway.

An examination of the city map from Cedar street to the Battery discloses that the only means of access to the district west of Broadway are Thames street, which is comparatively narrow and does not extend in a straight line to the river; Rector street, which is also narrow and has quite a heavy grade; Exchange Alley, which only extends from Broadway to Trinity Place and is too narrow to be of any moment; and Morris street, which now has an average width of about twenty-five feet, which makes the roadway so narrow that it is difficult for vehicles to pass each other.

The problem of furnishing this district west of Broadway with means of easy access has been agitated for many years. In the meantime a number of large and expensive buildings have been erected, which practically preclude any opening being made except in a few places. Morris street presents the most favorable spot for the creation of such an opening, because along its southerly side the buildings are of little, if any, value, and no great building is touched. Later on, if a large building be erected at the southwest corner of Broadway and Morris street, it will be impossible to widen the street except at a prohibitive expense.

## Yonkers Building Plans for November.

November proved to be a progressive month in the building industry in Yonkers, according to the building inspector's report for the month. Building operations were authorized which involved \$21,500 compared with \$128,500 in 1909. Sixty-five permits were issued.

## THE MIDTOWN BUILDING BOOM

## TWO MILES OF STREET FRONTAGE IMPROVED IN TWO YEARS.

If Two Buildings Were All in Fifth Avenue They Would Reach From Fourteenth Street to Fifty-fourth—Merchants Taking Advantage of Low Rents.

The production of lofts in the midtown section this year would probably have been of record volume for the section had it not been for a slowing down of construction work during the last few months. As it is more buildings have been undertaken this year than last. In 1909 fifty-seven buildings were planned, and this year so far 102. The bulk of these was projected during the first half of the year.

Though 1910 will surpass last year in the number of loft buildings constructed, the difference in the total cost will not be very great. With the exception of five the 102 new buildings planned during the year are all under 100 feet wide. Last year of fifty-seven twelve had a frontage of more than 100 feet.

The decrease of building activity in the section in the last few months is said by real estate agents to be just what was wanted, as a tendency to cut rents had developed. Lofts that were expected to rent at 80 cents were reduced to 65 and 70 cents, and lofts that were intended to bring 65 cents were offered at 50 and 55 cents. Merchants aware of the oversupply of new lofts waited until the renting season was over before looking for midtown quarters. In this way they have been able to obtain space at from 5 to 15 cents cheaper, and the demand for space is as lively now as it has been at any time.

With merchants it is only a question of the most advantageous time and terms to acquire premises in the midtown section. The advisability of being in a neighborhood convenient to all the important transit lines, the leading hotels and the large department stores is recognized. Already over 50 per cent of the buildings to be finished next February have been rented, so that it will not take long to fill up the supply of space now in the market.

The transformation of the midtown section into a great commercial center has taken place in the remarkably short space of four years. In 1905 the western end of the district was noted chiefly as the seat of the Tenderloin, on the eastern border of the city, where the mercantile and antique shops, while much of the intervening ground was occupied by old fashioned brownstone dwellings. Perhaps the most striking way of indicating the extent of the transformation is to point out that the new buildings planned this year between Fourteenth and Forty-second streets and Fourth and Eighth avenues will cover 3,735 feet of street frontage. This is 1,109 feet more than a mile. The buildings erected in 1909 covered 3,545 feet.

If the buildings planned both years were strung out in line they would cover nearly two miles of street frontage. If built on Fifth Avenue they would reach from Fourteenth to Fifty-fourth street. There is no section in the city that has changed so rapidly. Many of the antique shops and most of the old hotels that made Fourth Avenue famous have disappeared. West of Sixth Avenue twelve story business buildings have replaced the old gambling and dance houses. In the better class dwelling section brownstone houses have become a rarity.

There is now very little property between Fifth and Sixth avenues and Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth streets available for improvement. The builder has done his work there and is busy west of Sixth and south of Murray Hill. Madison Avenue south of a commercial neighborhood. Several big frontages have been purchased there recently for improvement with business buildings. The northeast corner of Thirty-third street, which was purchased the other day, is to be improved, according to report, with an eighteen story loft building. A twelve story building has been built at No. 72 and 74 Madison Avenue. Adjoining Dr. F. J. Hurst's church at the northeast corner of Twenty-fourth street a fifteen story building is being erected. Deals affecting almost every block on the avenue between Madison Square and Thirty-fourth street have been closed this year.

On Fifth Avenue three new buildings have been recently planned. The Croisic Building, which is going up at the northeast corner of Twenty-sixth street, is to be nineteen stories, the highest building in the city. A sixteen story building is being erected for Bonney, Teller & Co. at the southeast corner of Thirty-eighth street.

Broadway and Sixth Avenue, except near Greyhound Square, have been overlooked by builders.

On Seventh Avenue, however, several big operations have been announced during the year. At the northeast corner of Seventh Avenue and Twenty-fourth street a twelve story building is nearly completed. At the southwest corner of Third Street a new building is to be erected, and between Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth streets a new building is nearly ready for occupancy.

On Seventeenth street builders have gone beyond Seventh Avenue and are busy on three interesting operations. These adjoin each other and the new structures will range in height from six to twelve stories.

The Twenty-third street between Sixth and Seventh avenues is one of the notable features of the year. When the reconstruction of the midtown section was started, builders skipped Twenty-third street. They improved the streets south of it all the way to Twenty-first street. Then they jumped to Twenty-fifth street. Now that the upper twentieth street has been built, they are turning to Twenty-second, Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth streets.

Twenty-fourth street was the first of the three to be invaded. Then followed Twenty-second and Twenty-first streets. Twenty-third street. Three modern loft buildings are now under construction in the Twenty-third street block west of Sixth Avenue. In the block between Fifth and Sixth avenues Stern Bros. have built a big twelve story addition.

In Twenty-second street plans calling for nine or ten story buildings have been filed, and in Twenty-first street eight of the same height. Twenty-seventh street has six new constructions. For Thirty-second street six new buildings have been planned, but only four have been started. Twenty-fifth street has two new buildings planned, but only one has been started. The height of the majority of the buildings erected or planned in the year, however, several structures taller than twelve stories have been announced. They range in height from fifteen to twenty-two stories. The twenty-two story building is to be erected on Thirty-sixth street. It will be the highest loft building in the city.

A feature of the building operations in the midtown section this year is the number of small constructions. Twelve buildings of twenty-five feet or less frontage have been filed, as against four last year. Twenty-five foot lots are in demand and small firms for small lofts are given as the reason. The smallness of many big downtown buildings, the lack of room for expansion, and the fact that the small firms to follow, but this has until lately been impossible because of the large size of most of the lofts first erected in the section.

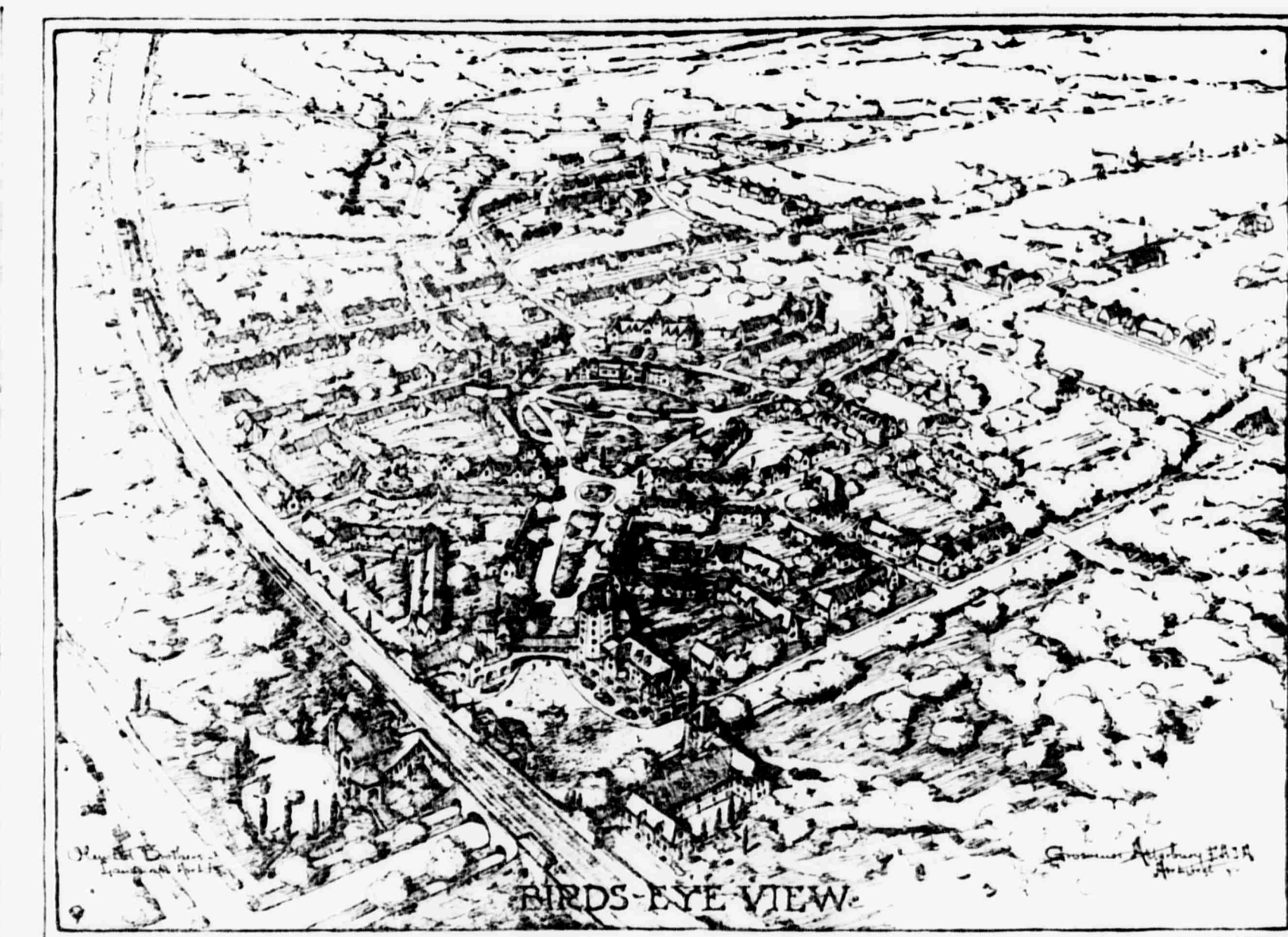


NINE SINGLE FAMILY DWELLINGS OF TEN TO TWELVE ROOMS EACH.

of real estate operators are giving; more in the matter of pleasant surroundings, of permanence and of common healthfulness. It is therefore the aim of the foundation to show what can be done toward making the home of the man earning an ordinary salary what it should be and still keep the venture in the class of good investments in the hope that others will follow the example.

Robert W. de Forest, vice-president of the foundation, speaks of the enterprise as being intended for those who can pay from \$25 a month upward in the purchase of a home. Mrs. Sage and those associated with her, he says, "have thought that homes could be supplied like those in the garden cities of England, with some greenery and flowers around them, with accessible playgrounds and recreation facilities and at no appreciably greater cost than is now paid for the same room in bare streets without any such adjacency. They have abhorred the constant repetition of the rectangular block in suburban localities where land contours invite other street lines. They have thought too that buildings of tasteful design, constructed of brick, cement or other permanent material, even though of somewhat greater initial cost, were really more economical in their durability and lesser repair bills than the repulsive cheaply built structures which are too often the type of New York's outlying districts."

The designing and laying out of the plan is in the hands of Grosvenor Atterbury, architect, and Frederick Law Olmsted, landscape architect. The roads, sewers and water supply and all the various features tending toward the health of the community have received the most careful consideration. In laying out the grounds Mr. Olmsted has striven to secure the full benefits resulting from three principles in city planning. One of these related to the main thoroughfares, which Mr. Olmsted says, should be direct, ample and convenient, no matter how they cut the land. Two eighty foot streets are carried through the property on lines 120 feet apart, in accordance with the city street plan covering adjacent property. A boulevard 125 feet wide fronts on Forest Park, the 33rd street which the city has set apart as the largest public park in Queens. These two avenues of seventy foot width radiate from Station Square through the property to the Boulevard and Forest Park. These avenues are provided with a setback for buildings, as also are the lesser streets



FOREST HILLS GARDENS.

ground and within many of the blocks will be smaller playgrounds, intended chiefly for the use of the younger children, so that these will not be forced out upon the streets.

The amount of land thus set apart for common use, Mr. Olmsted points out, must be paid for and at high prices, so that a distance from the center of Manhattan, and the paving must be done eventually

by the occupants. This is offset in two ways. First, land having such advantages has a higher market value than land not so provided and is of greater benefit to its occupants, and secondly

there has been but little provision made on Washington Heights is that which is represented by the family which can afford to pay but from \$20 to \$40 per month rent. When vacant lots get to a value of say \$12,000 and upward it is almost impossible to build houses in which flats can be rented at these rates, so the builder catering to this class must naturally look for cheaper lots, and following the line of least resistance finds himself in the Dyckman section. Here there are ten buildings under way, most of them nearing completion. In the finished houses in this section there is scarcely a vacancy, and even now in the middle of the winter many apartments have been rented in houses where even the plastering is not finished. One builder on 26th street near Ninth Avenue is just putting in his trim and has rented eight apartments at the rate of \$10 a month, with no free rent or other inducements.

While the greater part of the Dyckman district is bound to be the home center of thousands of people of moderate means, its great future lies in the commercial development of its waterfront. Here is a scant mile of frontage on the Harlem River, which represents practically all that is left on Manhattan Island of unused waterfront, and the only remaining place where large plots of upland fit for use in connection therewith can be had at reasonable figures.

There are two or three big commercial corporations which have under contemplation the purchase and improvement of a part of this waterfront, and if negotiations now under way are consummated it will mean an active buying and building movement throughout the Dyckman district for the early part of 1911.

The section needs no further transit facilities, having the Broadway subway with three stations (Dyckman, 26th and 21st streets), the Broadway trolley and the 26th street trolley connecting with the entire Bronx system. New subways built elsewhere will benefit this part of the city by relieving the traffic congestion on the existing road, thus improving the service. There is no part of the city where the north and south lines of travel and communication come so close to the waterfront, making the Dyckman section ideal in situation for high class factories, distribution plants and commercial de-

velopment. The Dyckman waterfront seems to be just ripe now for immediate utilization in view of the congestion of the streets and waterways in and about the central and lower parts of the city.

The real estate speculator and operator is very quick to see a situation of this kind, and usually gets in ahead of the builder or ultimate user, and unless all signs fail the coming spring will see an active speculative campaign at the northern end of Manhattan.

CHAS. GRIFFITH MOSES.

Tax Valuations on Real Estate.

We view with doubt and apprehension the prediction of Mr. Lawson Purdy, Commissioner of Taxes, that the increase in assessed valuations for 1911 will exceed \$600,000,000 and that during the four succeeding years it will exceed an additional sum of \$1,125,000,000. If the tax commissioners could succeed in legally maintaining the first increase of \$600,000,000, they would by this very operation create a condition whereby real estate values may fall, and the real values may be far below the assessed valuations fixed by them.

It must be remembered that many sections of the city are overassessed, as has been evidenced by recent public auction sales. Whatever the normal increase of the next five years may prove to be, a very large portion of the increased debt limit resulting therefrom will be required for other much needed improvements. We oppose the exhausting of the city's future resources for subway purposes when a solution which does not require it is afforded by acceptance of the Interborough's offer. From a report of the Finance Committee of the Allied Real Estate Interests.

## Wholesale Town Building.

The Canadian Government and the great railroads of the Northwest are now in the midst of the greatest development operations the world has ever seen. Before the middle of the year 1911 a programme will be completed that includes the building of 220 towns in the Dominion, an average of a town every other week day for the whole period of eighteen months since war began. Each will have official name and place on the map and a population of from 100 to 1,000 people, largely Americans, who are flocking into the new country. The railroads, with Government aid, have now 9,000 miles of road under construction and projected, and towns and roads are to grow together.—Yonkers & Companion.

## THE UPPER WEST SIDE

## WASHINGTON HEIGHTS BUILT UP IN RECORD TIME.

Has Been the Seat of the Great Upward Building Movement of the Last Few Years. A City of New Houses With Many Tenants From the Suburbs.

Washington Heights has ceased to be a separate entity, but has played its part in the integration of the great West Side, just as Yorkville did on the East Side a few years ago. This is typical of the evolution of Manhattan, each separate settlement developing from its own center, overlapping the boundaries of its neighbors and finally merging into one great community.

Each year emphasizes this state of affairs more and more, and to-day the term Washington Heights has become more a euphemism of saying "upper part of the West Side" than a designation of a separate district of the city.

The year 1910 has witnessed to a certain extent a species of adjustment and general leveling process on the Heights. Though there has been good sized building enterprises have been started, the year has been marked more by a spirit of the section finding itself, so to speak, than by new development, and the results on the whole seem to be satisfactory.

For five years the building loan operator and the builder had been pushing ahead, building up with modern five, six and ten story apartment houses a great area of vacant land and erecting a supply of homes fit for a city of no mean size, apparently with no regard to the normal growth of population. What has been the result? The conservative and overcautious ones have been wrong, and the daring and progressive ones have

been right, once more and are reaping the rewards for their pluck and their ability to read the future.

Now the final test of city real estate values is the rent roll, the tenant makes or breaks the builder, and if a building can be rented within a reasonable time of its completion at rents yielding a fair return for the capital invested it is a proper and successful operation. In order to learn just what the condition of things is in a certain neighborhood we must find out just what the renting situation is. Of course it is impossible to build hundreds of big apartment houses with accommodations for several thousand families in a new district within a very few years and not make many errors in judgment one way or another. While it is true that in some parts of the Heights there are quite a few houses with more vacancies than there should be to insure satisfactory returns, most of the houses are fairly well rented and not a few are completely full.

The very high priced apartment houses and the low priced five and six story walk up flats seem to make the best showing. The chief reason for this is that probably there have been more of the medium grade houses (those renting from \$200 to \$1,200 the apartment per annum) built than could be rented in one season; but even many of these very houses are well rented and not a few of them have been sold for permanent investment. There are other reasons too for vacancies. Many houses are badly planned and tenants are quick to see the difference between good and bad and will even go into neighborhoods a little more difficult of access in order to get into a well built, well arranged and well run house.

One builder on Convent Avenue and 147th Street has but one vacancy in a house recently finished, though there are several houses of the same type much

One-class of New-Yorkers for whom